

USDA Farm to School Team Monthly Report January 2011

Site Visits:

The Team has been drafting individual summaries for each of the 15 Farm to School site visits conducted in the 2010 fiscal year. The summaries communicate the highlights and broad overview of the Team's visit to each school district. As of January, the following narratives have been posted on the "Farm to School Team" (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2stacticalteam.htm>) and "Sights, Sounds, and Stories" (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/sightsoundsstories.htm>) Webpages to the USDA Farm to School Website:

- Independence Community School District in Independence, IA (December 2010);
- Burlington Public Schools in Burlington, VT (December 2010);
- Eugene School District in Eugene, OR (January 2010);
- Bethel School District in Eugene, OR (January 2010);

The remaining summaries will be posted to the Website in the near future.

A full summary report, which is currently begin compiled, will include the overall common threads of lessons learned, best practices, tips, common barriers, and possible solutions compiled from the Team's 15 site visits, as well as from the Team's discussions with members of the Farm to School community and observations. The 15 school districts, which were visited in the 2010 fiscal year, represented nine areas across of varied demographics and Farm to School characteristics. The Team will offer recommendations to the Department based on the site visits, as well as develop and/or reissue appropriate resource materials, guidance, and technical assistance for both schools and farmers based on their site visits. The full summary report is expected to be communicated through the USDA Farm to School website in the spring of 2011.

Policy Development/Technical Assistance:

- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency has developed the final rule on *Geographic Preference Option for Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs*, which entered Department clearance in January 2011.
- On January 27, 2011, policy memorandum SP 18-2011, *Procurement Geographic Preference Q&A's*, was issued to State and Regional Child Nutrition Program Directors. The policy memorandum provides answers to common questions on the geographic preference provision. The memorandum will be made available on the "policy" section of the USDA Farm to School website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2spolicy.htm>).
- Team members are editing additional Farm to School webpages that will focus on the operation and support of farm to school activities. The webpages will include information on working with farmers and schools, distribution models, impacts of farm to school, food safety, marketing materials for schools, farmers, and community members, supporting activities (e.g., school gardens), and a full summary of observations from the USDA Farm to School Team's site visits. Information on local procurement, USDA grant opportunities, school and community resources, and individual narratives from the Team's 2010 site visits are currently available on the USDA Farm to School Website.

- On January 19, 2011, the Team's October-November monthly report was added to the USDA Farm to School Website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2stacticalteam.htm>).
- On January 11 and 26, 2011, the USDA Farm to School Website was updated to include a narrative description of the Team's first site visit to Bethel School District in Eugene, Oregon, respectively (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2stacticalteam.htm> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/sightssoundsstories.htm>).
- On January 31, 2011, emails via the USDA Farm to School listserv were sent to inform listserv recipients of Website updates.
- The Farm to School Team continues to work with ERS regarding the testing of the Farm to School Census Survey.
- Continuously respond to inquiries submitted through the Farm to School email address.

Meetings/Conferences/Presentations:

- On January 12, 2011, the lead for the USDA Farm to School Team met with members of School Food FOCUS to discuss USDA's participation in their 2011 conferences.
- On January 13, 2011, the lead for the USDA Farm to School Team participated in a procurement webinar held by the Southeast Regional Office. General procurement, as well as geographic preference, requirements were discussed.
- On January 18, 2011, members of the USDA Farm to School Team met with Deputy Secretary to discuss the site visit summary report.
- On January 21, 2011, the lead for the USDA Farm to School Team met with Deputy Under Secretary Thornton to discuss best practices of Farm to School efforts.
- Members of the Farm to School Team continue to meet regularly with the National Farm to School Network, School Food FOCUS, and other Farm to School stakeholders to discuss future collaborations on Farm to School activities.
- Regular meetings/conference calls are scheduled with core and resource team members.

Upcoming Events (Second Quarter FY2011):

1. Continue release of individual narratives of the Farm to School Team's 2010 site visits via the USDA Farm to School website.
2. Release a summary of the Team's 15 site visits to include the overall common threads of lessons learned, best practices, tips, common barriers, and possible solutions. The summary will be communicated through the USDA Farm to School Website.